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ABSTRACT

This manual describes different types of accommodations educators can use to include students with disabilities in general education classrooms, including accommodations relating to instructional methods and materials, assignments and classroom assessments, time demands and scheduling, learning environment, and use of special communication systems. Chapter 1, "Accommodations," discusses what accommodations are, who is eligible for accommodations, and how Individualized Education Program (IEP) decisions about accommodations are made. Chapter 2, "Making Instruction More Effective," describes conspicuous steps and strategies teachers can take to accommodate different learners. It discusses using graphic organizers, the Big Accommodation Model, and scaffolding. The following chapter, "What Can You Change?" addresses specific instructional accommodations for students with limited reading abilities, difficulty understanding lectures and discussions, visual or hearing impairments, or difficulty understanding mathematical concepts and processes. It also addresses accommodations that can be made in scheduling and the classroom environment. The final chapter, "Get Started by Planning," discusses incorporating accommodations in the IEP, anticipating students' needs, and planning for lessons. Appendices include an annotated list of resources for accommodations and Florida State Board of Education Rules related to accommodations. (CR)

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Accommodations

ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A Guide for Educators

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ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A Guide for Educators

Accommodations

Florida Department of Education
Division of Public Schools and Community Education
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
1999

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ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A Guide for Educators

Accommodations

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1999
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
Division of Public Schools and Community Education

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Chapter

1

It's Monday and you've had a busy weekend. Your lesson plans are ready for the coming week. Things should go smoothly. But the assistant principal meets you in the hallway and invites you to attend an individual educational plan meeting. A new student has transferred to your school.

"What am I going to do with a student with disabilities? I'm not a special educator!"

Accommodations

What are accommodations?

Why can we use accommodations?

Who is eligible?

How are the decisions made?

What are accommodations?

Accommodations are one of the keys to planning effective educational programs for students with a disability. Many students with a disability need only small changes to the way they are instructed and tested to be able to participate and be successful in regular classes.

Accommodations involve a wide range of techniques and support systems that help students with a disability work around any limitations that result from their disability. Students who are blind may need to use braille textbooks or books-on-tape. Students in wheelchairs may need a ramp or elevator to be able to move independently in a school building. Students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may need to have a sign language interpreter. Accommodations are really "whatever it takes" to

assure students with a disability the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the general curriculum and ultimately earn a diploma.

Accommodations are made to the *way* students learn and *how* they are tested.

Types of accommodations

Accommodations may be provided in five general areas.

- Instructional methods and materials
- Assignments and classroom assessments
- Time demands and scheduling
- Learning environment
- Use of special communication systems

This manual describes each of these types of accommodations and gives suggestions of ways to assist students with a disability. In some cases the specific accommodation is needed by one student. But frequently an accommodation can also help other students in your classroom to be more successful.

Expectations for student achievement do not have to change when accommodations are used. Students with a disability can be challenged to meet the same high standards as their nondisabled peers. Most can take the same tests, pass the same kinds of courses, and earn the same high grades to graduate with a standard diploma.

However, there are options for students with a disability who are not able to meet all requirements for a standard diploma. Some students with a disability may need modified program requirements or a different curriculum. For those students, expected outcomes and curriculum content can be modified. Generally, these students will be working for a special diploma.

Why can we use accommodations?

Over the past 25 years, public schools have opened their doors to students with a disability in ways that were once unimagined. Parents and educators have worked toward providing education for students with a disability in the *least restrictive environment*. Teachers have created special instructional methods and materials and collaborated with professionals to deliver educational programs in the *mainstream* and work towards *inclusion*.

To ensure that students with a disability have access to an appropriate education program, federal and state laws and regulations require schools to provide accommodations.

- PL 94-142 *Education of All Handicapped Children Act* (1975) led the way. This federal law mandated that children with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment.

It's the law!

- The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA, 1997) provides even clearer mandates for students with a disability to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum. Needed supplementary aids and program modifications must be documented for each student.

- *Section 504* of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* provides rights for students with a disability and includes those students who need assistance but are not otherwise eligible for special education services.

- The *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* prohibits discrimination against any persons with disabilities.

- Florida's state and district laws and regulations support the mandates of the federal law. Students with a disability in Florida have a *right* to program accommodations and modifications. School districts are required to provide needed accommodations and modifications. State Board of Education Rule 6A.6.0312, FAC, Course Modifications, and Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC, Modifications of State Student Assessment Test Instruments and Procedures for Exceptional Students and Other Eligible Handicapped Students, specify allowable accommodations and modifications (See appendix B).

Who is eligible?

Students who have been properly evaluated and staffed into programs for students with a disability are eligible for accommodations. Professionals, family members, and the student work as a team to develop an individual educational plan (IEP). The IEP team looks at the student's present level of performance and educational needs and decides what kinds of accommodations must be used for that student. If you are a regular educator who is responsible for teaching a student with disabilities, you may also be a member of the IEP team. Your knowledge of the requirements of the general curriculum is very important for the team. Together, you can determine which accommodations will be necessary.

Categories of Disabilities

A brief description of the categories of exceptionalities used in Florida is provided below. A student who is eligible for exceptional student education (ESE) services must be identified by one or more of these categories. These brief descriptions are provided to help you with the terminology and acronyms.

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)

By definition, students who have specific learning disabilities have normal intelligence. As a result of their difficulties with psychological or information processing, they may have significant problems in learning basic skills. These students may be quite capable in some academic areas, but may have significant deficiencies in others.

Mentally Handicapped (MH)

Students who have significant cognitive disabilities and more generalized deficits in learning are classified as mentally handicapped. They have difficulty learning the necessary skills and behaviors needed for daily living. Students with mild cognitive deficits are classified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH). They are generally able to learn some basic academic and employment skills and ultimately will be able to function fairly independently as adults. Students with moderate cognitive deficits are classified as trainable mentally handicapped (TMH). They are generally able to learn basic daily living skills, but will require ongoing support and supervision throughout their lives. Students with severe cognitive deficits are classified as profoundly mentally handicapped (PMH). These students are able to participate in life's activities, but will require extensive assistance and support throughout their lives.

Emotionally Handicapped (EH)

Students with significant behavioral and emotional dysfunction are included in this category. Often these students have normal intelligence, but their lack of self-control or poor mental health inhibits their success in an academic environment. Students who are severely emotionally disturbed (SED) require a comprehensive therapeutic educational program.

Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing (DHH)

Students with substantial hearing impairments are classified as deaf or hard of hearing. These students may require the use of sign language or a total communication system to be able to obtain information that others gain by listening. Individual students may need technology such as amplifiers or hearing aids. Students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing often have difficulties with reading, writing, and communication skills that are related to their hearing loss.

Visually Impaired (VI)

Students who are blind or visually impaired have significant loss of use of their functional vision. These students may need to use braille for reading and writing or learn how to rely on other types of technology or assistance to help them obtain information. Orientation and mobility training is also critical for students with visual impairments so they are able to move and travel independently.

Physically Impaired (PI)

Students with physical disabilities or motor impairments may require the use of a wheelchair or walker to get around in school. Some students with motor disabilities require the use of special assistive technology to be able to write and communicate. Students with traumatic brain injury or other chronic or acute health impairments who require special education services are also included in this category.

Speech and Language Impaired (SLI)

Students with speech and language impairments may have problems articulating sounds and words and using fluent speech. Some students have more severe receptive and expressive language disorders. Students with speech and language disorders may have difficulty saying what they mean or understanding what has been said. For some students, these impairments also affect their ability to read and write.

504 Plans

Students with physical or mental disabilities who do not meet eligibility criteria for ESE programs may also require accommodations. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides the right to accommodations to all Americans with disabilities. Your school district develops 504 Plans for these students.

The needs of each student with a disability must be considered on an individual basis. The following list briefly describes learning problems that many students with a disability experience.

Common learning problems

Students with a disability may have difficulty

- knowing how to *organize* information meaningfully
- *relating* new information to previous knowledge
- remembering *large quantities* of information
- breaking down *complex* concepts for learning
- discovering ways to understand *abstract* concepts
- *analyzing* information to arrive at conclusions and solve problems or identify relationships
- believing that it is *important* or necessary to learn the information taught at school

Chapter 3 in this manual describes five types of accommodations. Suggestions of the types of learning problems and disabilities that may benefit from their use are included in the descriptions. This is intended to help you identify possible accommodations for your students.

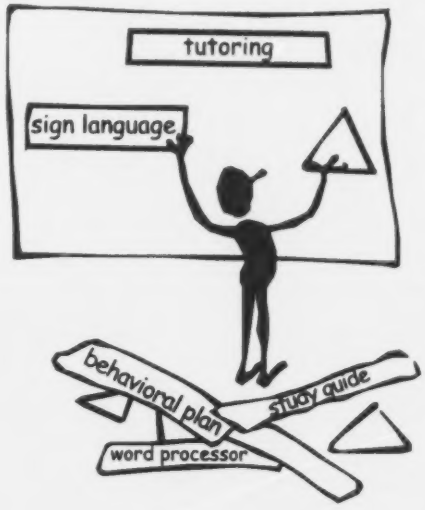
How are IEP decisions about accommodations made?

Through the IEP process, a team of professionals, family members, and the student makes decisions about what accommodations the student needs for his or her educational program or for the state and districtwide testing programs using information about the student's current level of performance and annual goals and objectives. They also identify any special service or program modifications that might be needed. All of

these are documented on the student's IEP.

The IEP team discusses what accommodations would be *necessary* for the individual student to be successful in a basic education or vocational program. The team considers the required curriculum or course requirements and the methods for instruction and assessment that are typically used in the classroom. The following questions may be discussed.

- *Does the student have the fundamental skills that are needed for this grade level or course?*
- *Does the student have the necessary background knowledge or experiences?*
- *How independent is the student in completing assignments?*
- *Does the student learn and work as fast as do other students in the class?*
- *What kinds of tests or assignments are typically used in this program?*
- *Can the student be expected to use the same kind of books and instructional resources as other students?*



- *Can a tutoring or buddy program be used?*
- *How can the behavior management strategies used in the classroom be adapted to support the student's need for structure and limits?*
- *Will accommodations be needed to the physical learning environment?*
- *Will teachers need additional support to work with this student?*

Generally, the IEP team recommends that the student be given the same types of accommodations for both instruction and assessment. For example, if the student needs extended time in the regular classroom to complete assignments and tests, then it is appropriate to use the same type of accommodation for the

state or districtwide assessment program.

When accommodations are being considered, it is very important that input be obtained from everyone involved—including the parents, ESE staff, and you, the basic or vocational teacher(s) who will be responsible for delivering the accommodations. Don't forget to ask the student. He or she can provide important insights into needed accommodations. If a student refuses to use a particular accommodation because it makes him or her look different than his or her peers, other options should be considered.

Decision-making principles

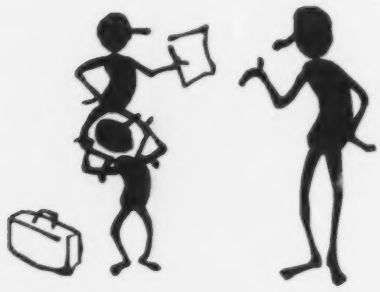
Decisions about accommodations for instruction and assessment for an individual student should be based on the following principles:

- Accommodations must be *necessary* for the student to be able to learn and ultimately demonstrate mastery of knowledge or skills.
- Accommodations should facilitate an *accurate* demonstration of what the student knows or can do.
- Accommodations must *not* provide the student with an unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of tests. Changes to any standardized test procedure must only include those explicitly allowed in the test manual.
- Accommodations in state and districtwide tests must be the *same*, or nearly the same, as adaptations used by the student in completing classroom instruction and assessment activities.

Summary

Remember that the IEP is the first place to find what accommodations are needed by an individual student. You may also determine that from time to time, additional accommodations are needed for specific assignments or learning activities. You are encouraged to provide additional accommodations, as long as they fit within these decision-making principles.

Chapter
2



Making Instruction More Effective

Focus on the essentials

Use conspicuous steps and strategies

Provide temporary support

Make linkages obvious and explicit

Prime background knowledge

Review for fluency and generalization

All students can benefit from the use of effective instructional practices. This chapter describes general techniques and strategies for instruction that have been proven to be effective with diverse groups of learners. Students with a disability, students with limited English proficiency, and other students who are at-risk for failure in school can profit from these strategies. These practices are drawn from a broad base of research and investigation.

Research-based

Take a close look at your own teaching practices. You may find that you are overlooking some of these techniques. You may feel there is not enough time to use all of these strategies. However, the opposite is true. When you incorporate these techniques into your daily teaching routines, you will find more of your

students are able to be successful. You will spend less time reteaching and remediating. Even your most capable students can benefit from these techniques.

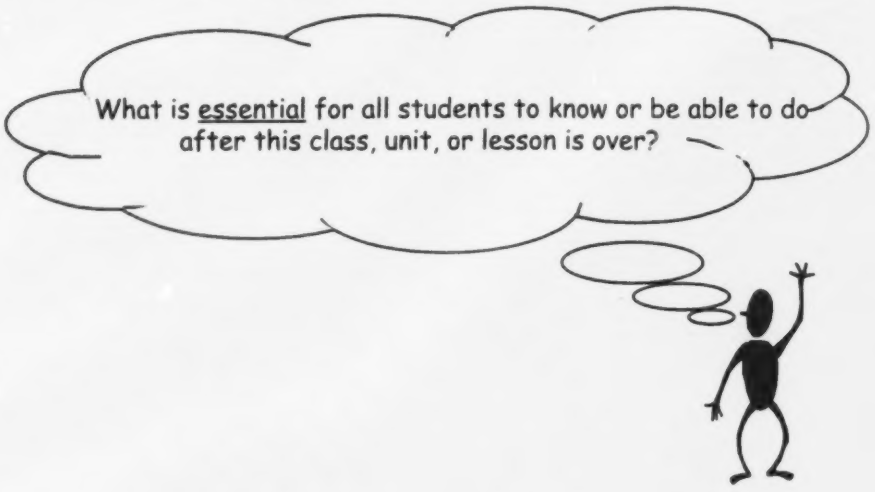
As previously mentioned, these techniques are drawn from a wide range of research. The descriptions used in this manual generally follow the categories described by Kameenui and Carnine in their book *Effective Teaching Strategies That Accommodate Diverse Learners* (1998). However, the specific instructional strategies that are listed with each category are not limited to what is included in that book.

This chapter briefly describes each category and then lists examples of strategies that you can use in the classroom.

Focus on the essentials

In Florida, the Sunshine State Standards (1996) have been developed to describe what students must learn and be able to do. Many phrases found in curriculum documents and other kinds of educational literature reflect a focus on learning the essentials. The introductory sections of most educational standards documents emphasize the role of important concepts, principles, laws, and theories that are the basis for the standards. The terms "key concepts" or "big ideas" are sometimes used by educators to convey the importance of helping students to learn concepts and rules that will generalize and serve as links to future learning.

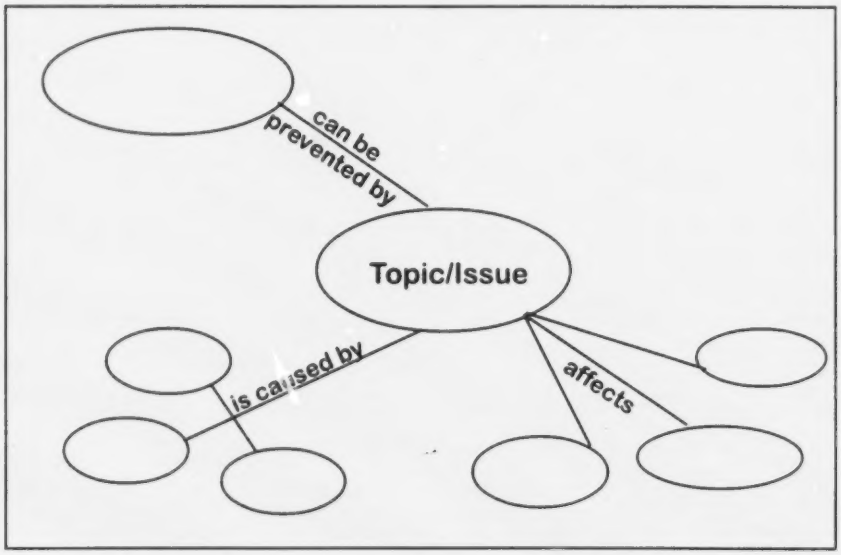
You can use the concept of *essentials* to plan instruction more efficiently. Ask yourself



The answers to this question should reflect the important principles, big ideas, and key concepts included in the Sunshine State Standards and the curriculum guides adopted by your school district. Once you've answered this question, you can then plan learning activities that will help all students meet this expectation.

Graphic organizers

Graphic organizers such as semantic webs and concept maps can be used to help students see the key concepts. By laying out the important ideas and critical details graphically, you help students see how the ideas are connected to each other. Don't forget to label the lines between the ideas to show how the ideas link together. You can find additional kinds of graphic organizers in the *Florida Curriculum Frameworks* (1996).



Thematic instruction

Instructional units that combine subject areas can make the themes or essential ideas more apparent and meaningful to students. A range of techniques can be used to integrate instruction. The *Florida Curriculum Frameworks* (1996) describes the following models for making curricular connections

Infusion—one subject area is integrated with another.

Parallel Instruction—a common theme is developed in different subject areas, although each subject is taught separately.

Multidisciplinary Instruction—a common concept, theme, or problem is addressed through different subject areas and a joint assignment or project links the various disciplines.

Transdisciplinary Instruction—two or more subject areas address a common concept, theme, or project. Instruction is presented in a totally integrated fashion and a major project is the focus of instructional units.

The Big Accommodation Model was designed to help middle school students learn more effectively by drawing upon the "big ideas" of academic content. Kameenui and Carnine (1998) give the following examples of big ideas.

Subject Area	Big Ideas
Beginning Reading	Phonemic awareness—*ability to perceive spoken words as sequences of sounds* Alphabetic understanding—*knowing that written words are composed of individual letters* Automaticity—*ability to translate letters-to-sounds-to-words fluently*
Writing	Basic text structures—*phrases, sentences, and paragraphs; types of prose* Stages of the writing process Reader-writer relationship Mechanics and composition techniques
Mathematics	Organizing structures and principles —*number families, the identity principle, proportions, volume and area, estimation*
Science	Scientific inquiry process Central ideas and organizing principles —*using the idea of convection to explain climate patterns, air flow, ocean currents*
Social Studies	Organizing structures and principles —*problem-solution-effect* —*success of group efforts is related to motivation, leadership, resources, and capability*

In the Big Accommodation Model, students are taught how to use higher order thinking skills with these big ideas. Specially designed instructional materials and teacher training are available to support this model. Several middle schools in Florida are serving as pilot sites.

Focussing on the essentials of learning begins with the planning process used by the teacher. The Center for Research on Learning at the University of Kansas has developed three planning routines that use a combination of graphic organizers and specific implementation strategies (Lenz, 1997). These help secondary teachers lay out the key concepts and critical skills as they plan a whole course, a unit of instruction, or a single lesson. Students use the graphic organizers to guide their learning and monitor their understanding of the instructional content.

Planning routines

Use conspicuous steps and strategies

Teachers can help students learn a new concept or skill more easily by teaching them to follow a set of procedures or steps. The steps should reflect an efficient and effective way to apply a concept or complete a task, much as an expert would do. If you want students to learn the scientific inquiry process, for example, you should teach them a set of steps or procedures to follow using vocabulary they can understand.

When teachers introduce a new concept or procedure, the steps should be modeled using a think-aloud technique in which the teacher describes the mental processes being used. As students are expected to apply the new learning, the use of the steps can be prompted by a cue card, a verbal reminder by the teacher, or some other memory aid.

Model and think aloud

Some curriculum materials do not provide explicit strategy instruction. Students are expected to be able to discover the steps and strategies on their own. If you are using such materials, you should add conspicuous strategy instruction. You will find that more students can learn to reason and apply concepts when they have an explicit set of procedures to follow.

If the curriculum materials have explicit steps or strategies, you will need to evaluate them. Strategies with a narrow application can be confusing and result in rote learning. For example, telling

students to "begin every paragraph with a topic sentence" would result in a stilted style of writing.

Some strategies are too broad. Telling students to "plan before writing" does not provide much guidance. A more useful strategy would provide specific guidance in how to generate ideas, ways to elaborate, and how to evaluate the writing plan.

You will need to look at your instructional materials and methods and evaluate the use of steps and strategies. If explicit strategies are included, are they clearly described? Do they have narrow or broad applications? Think of yourself as a beginning learner. Would you be able to use the strategies that are included? You can modify the materials to add strategies or to change the ones that are included. Finding strategies that are just right is not an easy task. You may have to try them out with students and revise them if they are not adequate.

The Center for Research on Learning at the University of Kansas has developed Content Enhancement Routines and the Strategies Intervention Model, which include a number of teaching routines that will help teachers and students use a set of general strategies for learning (Lenz, 1997). Several routines center around the learning of concepts, while others help teachers learn how to make information easier to remember. Students can also be taught strategies to help them with writing assignments, reading comprehension, and test taking.

Provide temporary support

All students may need some assistance when they are first learning a new concept or skill. Even for something as simple as knowing where to put your name and the date on a class assignment, teachers may point to the place on the homework paper where the student's name and date must be recorded, or they may include a box that has the words *Name* and *Date* alongside lines to be filled in.

The term *scaffolding* has been used by educators to describe the types of support needed when students are first acquiring new knowledge and skills. Scaffolding may be provided through verbal prompts and cues, visual highlighting and diagrams, or other types of assistance used by students to begin to build their knowledge and proficiency in skills. Just as scaffolding

is used in construction to provide support for the builders as they put up walls or add the finishing touches, students need support to help them perform until they are able to use the knowledge and skills on their own.

It may be helpful to use a continuum of *maximum—minimum* when thinking about scaffolding and support. The *maximum* amount of support is provided when students require full physical manipulation or a complete copy. A student may be able to participate in the activity but is not able to complete the task alone. For motor skills, this is quite often the case. A physical education teacher might position a student's arm and guide it through the correct movements for throwing a ball. An elementary teacher may move a student's hand to help him or her feel how to make a cursive letter *p*. Giving the student copies of your lecture notes instead of expecting him or her to take notes is another example of providing maximum support.

Minimum-maximum

As students gain more proficiency with the targeted knowledge and skills and with learning how to learn, the amount of support can and should be reduced. Providing outlines or study guides, identifying the page numbers for the answers to textbook questions, or showing students models or examples of expected responses are types of *minimum* support commonly used by teachers.

Modeling provides minimum support. Teachers provide a model or example, and the student applies the model to his or her own situation. Teachers frequently use examples in their instructions to model the expected responses for students. Students can use a model if they are able to identify the key features or critical processes used to perform the skill or understand the concept exemplified in the model. Think about learning to dance the box step. You could watch someone go through the steps, but it is much easier when you can follow a diagram on the floor, and the teacher directs you, "feet together, right foot slide, left together, right foot back, left together...." Seeing or hearing key features of the model, that is, where your feet are supposed to be and where they are supposed to move, lets you know how to do the dance. You can help students become aware of the key features of the model.

The key to the use of scaffolding in teaching is that it is *temporary*. Prompting and guidance needed at the beginning must be removed if students are to be independent.

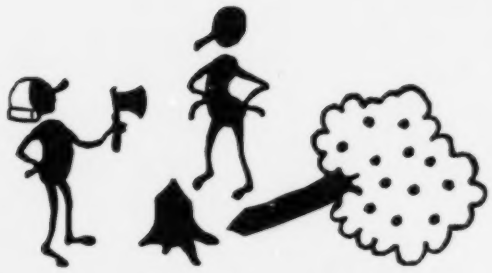
The following are techniques to use for scaffolding:

Ideas for scaffolding

- Provide the starters or incomplete statements and have the students add the rest.
- Identify "in-between" tasks that guide the students to independence.
- Give students an outline, diagram, or study guide.
- Use structured patterns or plans to help students learn.
- Use oral reading and interspersed questions to help students process material in textbooks.
- Identify the page numbers where topics are discussed or answers to questions can be found.
- Use color-coding or underlining to highlight important ideas or key steps.
- Use oral or written prompts or cues to remind students what to do.
- Use peer tutoring or cooperative learning to provide support for students.
- Incorporate activities in lessons that provide guided practice before you expect students to perform skills or use knowledge independently.

Prime background knowledge

The ability to learn new information often depends on how easily and effectively students are able to relate it to their own knowledge. Helping students to see how the new knowledge or skill fits with what they have already experienced or learned makes it much easier for them to learn. The techniques that follow can be used to help students make associations with what they already know.



- Use a synonym or antonym to make comparisons.
  This is the same as... This is the opposite of...
- Use simple or extended comparisons.
  A water cycle is just like the...
- Give symbolic examples to help form a mental image.
  The Food Guide Pyramid represents one way to plan what we eat.
- Use a personal example or story to make associations.
  I first began to understand the concept of democracy when my family planned its summer vacations.
- Relate topic to a current or past event that the students already know about.
  Support for the space program in the United States really took off when Russia launched Sputnik in the 1960s.
- Relate the concept to a fictional story or scenario.
  The story of Romeo and Juliet helps us to understand how family conflicts can...

Techniques for priming knowledge

Relating to prior knowledge is sometimes difficult for diverse learners. They may have difficulty remembering what they have learned. They may not be able to see the similarities or connections in their new learning with what they already know. If students lack the necessary background knowledge, then the teacher must provide instruction so that students will have the critical prerequisite knowledge.

Review for fluency and generalization

The need for review is very critical for fluent learning and generalization, particularly for students with a disability. Students need a variety of opportunities to practice what they have learned. Many students may have difficulty using newly acquired knowledge and skills in subsequent classroom situations and in situations outside the classroom. On the next page, general guidelines about the importance of reviews are described.

- *Learning is enhanced when multiple reviews and checks are conducted.* Observations and assessments of student learning must occur all along the way. When multiple reviews and checks are used, students become more aware of what they are doing correctly and what they need to change.

Enhancing learning through practice and review

- *Learning is enhanced when students have the opportunity to work towards mastery.* Students must have opportunities for guided and independent practice. Guided practice involves the use of visual, verbal, or physical prompts to help students remember what they are supposed to do. The use of study guides or cooperative learning can also be a part of guided practice. Be sure to give corrective feedback and fade your use of prompts or reminders when students are ready to practice independently.

- *Learning is enhanced through well-designed feedback.* Feedback helps students become aware of what they are doing correctly and what needs to be changed. Feedback also helps students learn how to detect and correct their own errors independently.

- *The practice of new skills or information in a variety of contexts is necessary.* In order to help students achieve the necessary fluency and proficiency with new knowledge and skills, opportunities must be provided to promote generalization and maintenance of the desired level of proficiency. A onetime exposure is not sufficient for acquiring skills that are needed by independent learners.

Summary

Teachers can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of instruction by using the six techniques described in this chapter. These techniques have been proven to increase the likelihood that students who are at risk for failure in school will have a more successful learning experience. In addition, these techniques are also helpful for high-achieving students.

Chapter 3

What Can You Change?

Instructional methods and materials

Assignments and assessments

Time demands and schedule

The learning environment

Special communication systems

Providing accommodations for students with a disability means that you may need to change the ways you teach or test. You may need to allow the student to use alternate instructional materials or make changes in the learning environment. When you think about accommodations for learning, it makes sense to consider these general factors (Deschenes, Ebeling, & Sprague, 1994).

General factors

INPUT Can the student learn from the same kinds of instruction and materials as his or her classmates?
If not, how can the student successfully acquire the information and skills to be learned?

OUTPUT Can the student participate in the lessons and be assessed in the same ways as his or her classmates?
If not, how can the student successfully participate and be assessed?

RATE Can the student work as fast as the rest of the class? Does the student need the same amount of feedback and practice?
If not, how can the schedule and practice opportunities be adapted?

SUPPORT Can the student manage independent and group work as well as his or her classmates?
If not, what kinds of adjustments are needed?

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations involve anticipating problems a student with a disability may have with instruction or assessment activities. You may need to change the way you teach, change the materials that the student uses, or make adaptations in the learning environment. The student may need to use some type of *assistive technology* to overcome or mitigate the effects of his or her disability. Assistive technology encompasses a wide range of tools and techniques. Some low-tech tools include pencil grips, study guides, or highlighted materials. High-tech tools include electronically operated equipment such as a talking calculator or specially designed word processor. You'll find some ideas for using assistive technology as an accommodation in this chapter.

Instructional methods and materials

The first step when considering accommodations for a student with a disability is to think of how the student will be expected to learn and practice new knowledge and skills. Frequently, small changes in the way instruction is delivered can have a powerful impact on student learning. As described in chapter 2, you can enhance the impact of instruction by using graphic organizers, highlighting important concepts, and repeating key material. A student with a disability may need increased opportunities to practice skills and use knowledge, particularly in authentic or concrete situations.

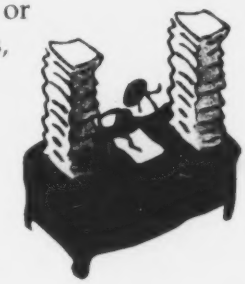
Common problems

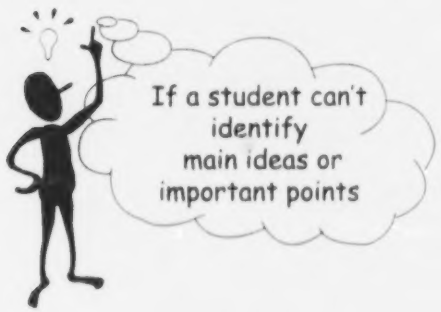
Many students with a disability experience problems in the classroom because they cannot read well; do not understand lectures and discussions; or do not conceptualize abstract symbols, concepts, or theories easily. They may not be able to link new knowledge with what they already know. They may not be proficient in using the underlying skills needed for learning, such as maintaining attention, interpreting the meaning of new information, following directions, and managing their own behavior. Suggestions for accommodations to use with instructional materials and methods for students who have common learning problems or conditions are found on the following pages:

- limited reading abilities (pp. 21-22)
- difficulty understanding lectures and discussions (p. 23)
- visual or hearing impairments (p. 25)
- difficulty understanding mathematical concepts and processes (p. 26)

Accommodations for students with limited reading abilities

The ability to read is one of the keys to academic success. Many students with a disability do not read on grade level. They may still be learning basic decoding and word-identification skills or comprehension strategies to help them understand the words, phrases, and sentences they read. Some written materials present additional challenges because they are not well organized.





A student with a disability may have difficulty detecting the main ideas or what is important to remember in information he or she is reading. He or she may get lost in the details and confused by the way the ideas are presented in a text or reference book. Try these accommodations.

√ Highlight important points of the text. Tell the student to read these points first.

√ Give the student a list of important vocabulary.

√ Have the student read the summary or objectives first.

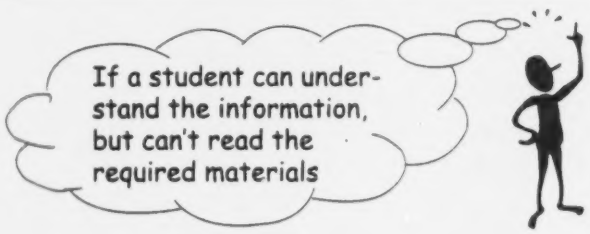
√ Have the student read the review questions first, then look for the answers.

√ Give the student a worksheet or study guide to follow when he or she must do independent reading.

√ Use hands-on activities, pictures, or diagrams to provide alternate ways of learning abstract concepts or complex information.

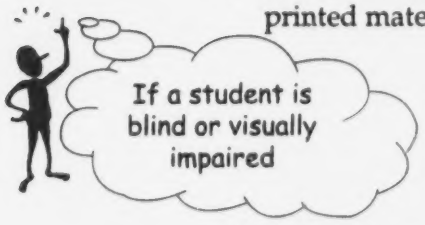
√ Let the student use sticky notes or an erasable highlighter to mark key points in the textbook.

√ Let the student use a book written at a lower grade level. This helps the student pay more attention to the main ideas.



A student with a disability may understand information when he or she listens to it, but not be able to read materials required for class assignments. Here are some things you can do.

- √ Provide an audio version of the material. Use books-on-tape or have an assistant, volunteer, or other student make a recording.
- √ Provide alternate materials with similar content at a lower reading level.
- √ Use a videotape or movie that presents the same information.
- √ Use assistive technology to transfer printed words to speech.
- √ Have a learning buddy read aloud textbooks or other printed material.

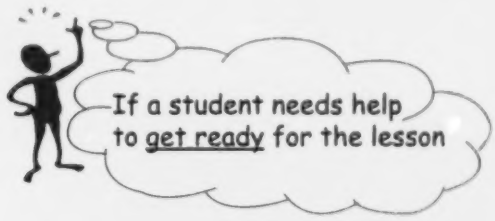


Students who are blind or visually impaired may require specially prepared materials or equipment to obtain information for class.

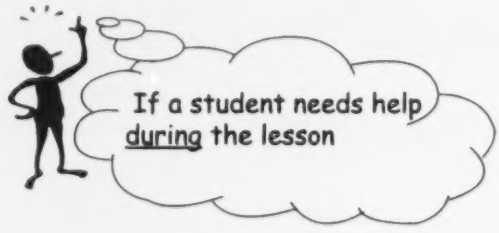
- √ Provide books-on-tape or large-print versions of texts.
- √ Provide books and other instructional materials in braille.
- √ Provide copies of class handouts and materials with key information in an embossed format.
- √ Provide a special tilt-top desk or book stand to hold materials for easier reading.
- √ Provide specialized equipment such as an optical enhancer, magnifier, tape recorder, stylus and slate, or braillewriter.

Accommodations for students who have difficulty understanding lectures and discussions

In most classrooms, teachers present the majority of instruction by lecturing or by facilitating discussion among students. Due to difficulties with maintaining attention, following ideas, and interpreting information presented orally, some students with a disability may need accommodations to be more successful with instruction that is provided orally. Accommodations may be needed before, during, and after the lecture or discussion.



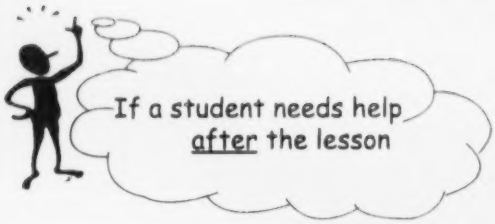
- √ Introduce new vocabulary prior to lesson; prepare glossary of terms; use visual aids [chalkboard, overhead, charts].
- √ Use advance organizers to alert students to what will be included and expected from the lesson or discussion.
- √ Provide an overview of the content or expected learning at the beginning of the session.
- √ Present material in a logical manner and use explicit cues to shift from one aspect to the next.
- √ Promote active involvement of students by asking questions or breaking up the lecture with small group interaction, discussion, or structured responses.



- √ Break the information into steps or key components and monitor the student's comprehension as the information is presented.
- √ Provide oral and visual clues during lecture or discussion about what is important to include in notes. Write important ideas on the board or chart paper. Use different color chalk or markers for emphasis or coding.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- √ Provide structured organizers for notetaking, such as a copy of overheads, outline of lecture, or pre-designed graphic organizer.
- √ Provide students with copies of notes taken by peers.
- √ Teach the student how to use a two-column notetaking format or concept mapping for notes.
- √ Key class notes to relevant pages in the textbook.
- √ Let the student use a tape recorder to record class lectures and discussions.

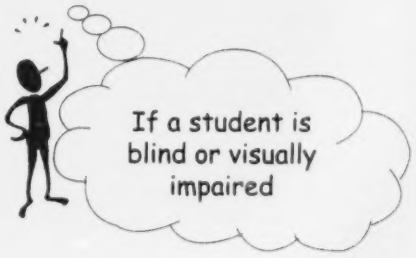


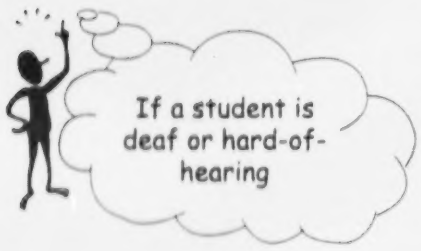
- √ Repeat, paraphrase, and summarize all important points, particularly at the conclusion of the lecture or discussion.
- √ Ask the student to paraphrase key points in his or her own words and identify anything that is still unclear.
- √ Prepare a summary of important information from the lecture with blanks to be filled or questions to be answered by the student.
- √ Use cooperative learning techniques such as Think-Pair-Share or Jigsaw to have students review key points.
- √ Ask the student to tell or write the important information that was included in the lesson before the class ends. Encourage him or her to ask questions.
- √ Arrange for time to meet with the student after class to clarify anything the student doesn't understand.

√ Talk while you teach, making an attempt to describe exactly what you are doing. Be sure to describe nonverbal messages and introduce beginnings, transitions, and closures to each activity.

√ Use real-life examples and concrete materials whenever possible.

√ Make the student feel comfortable asking for assistance. "Tell me what you need." "How does this fit with what you know?"





√ Make sure the student is facing you when you are speaking.

√ Seat the student in the place where he or she can receive maximum information and is least likely to be distracted by other classroom activities.

√ Use nonverbal communications to convey your messages.

√ Speak naturally.

√ Use visual information (words, charts, graphics) to reinforce what is presented orally. Repeat as often as necessary.

√ Help the student feel comfortable asking others for assistance whenever it is needed. "Tell me what you need."

√ Use a sign language interpreter or notetaker when appropriate.

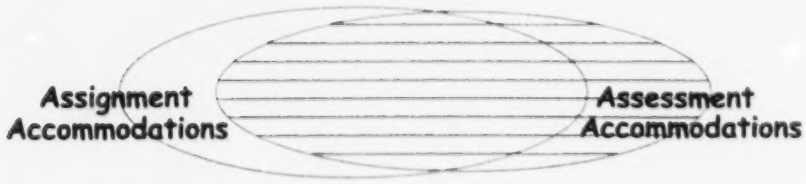
Accommodations for students who have difficulty with mathematical concepts and processes

A student with a disability may have problems learning mathematical concepts and processes. Some students have poor procedural skills and continue to rely on immature strategies, like counting on their fingers. Poor memory capabilities may result in problems retrieving basic facts. Many students with math disabilities also have reading disabilities.

- √ Let the student use concrete materials and manipulatives to explore and learn about mathematical concepts.
- √ Use computer-based models to represent math concepts.
- √ Let the student practice skills using computer-based instruction.
- √ Let the student use a calculator for routine computation tasks.
- √ Let the student use a chart or table with basic math facts.
- √ Color-code or highlight key words in math word problems.
- √ Let the student use a flowchart to plan strategies for problem solving.

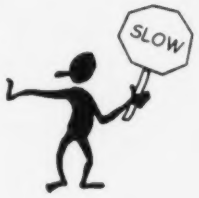
Assignments and assessments

Frequently, students with a disability need accommodations for specific types of classroom assignments and assessment procedures. Generally, a student needs the same kinds of accommodations for both assignments and assessments. If the student needs to use a word processor to complete a written assignment, he or she will also need it for a written test. This Venn diagram depicts the overlap of accommodations.



It is important to remember that the accommodations to assignments or assessments only change *how* the student may practice or demonstrate what has been learned. The expectations and criteria for evaluation of the final product or performance should be similar to what is used to evaluate the performance of students without disabilities.

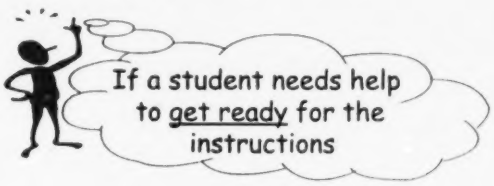
Many students with a disability experience problems with assignments and assessments because they can't remember the instructions or have problems expressing themselves orally or in writing. Suggestions for accommodations to use with the assignments and assessments for students who have common learning problems or conditions are found on the following pages:



- difficulty following instructions (pp. 27-28)
- difficulty completing assignments (pp. 28-29)
- difficulty with complex tasks and organization (pp. 29-31)
- limited writing abilities (pp. 31-33)
- difficulty taking tests (pp. 33-36)

Accommodations for students who have difficulty following instructions

Teachers generally give directions orally, in writing, and by demonstrating or modeling what is expected. Students with a disability have difficulty following instructions because they may not be able to sustain sufficient attention. They may not be able to see or hear the instructions. They may not be able to understand what the directions mean or not be able to read well enough. Some students may not be able to identify the critical behaviors when viewing a model or example.

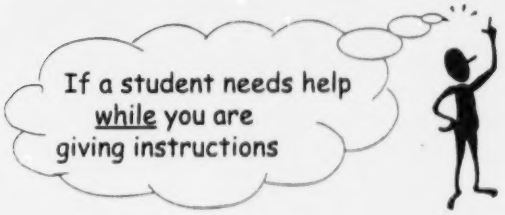


√ Use a prearranged signal to gain attention before giving directions.

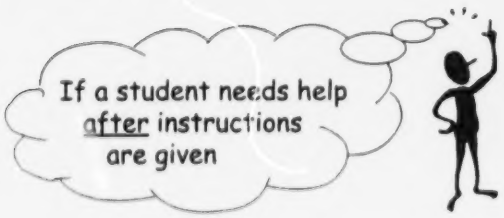
√ Make sure the student is facing you when instructions are given.

√ Change your tone of voice to alert the student and sustain attention.

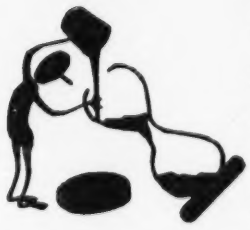
√ Give the student an agenda or schedule for each day.



- √ Combine oral directions with pictures, words, or diagrams.
- √ Read written directions orally before starting the assignment.
- √ When modeling expected behavior, describe critical components.
- √ Complete sample problems or tasks to show the student what is expected.
- √ Have the student paraphrase instructions or show you what to do.
- √ Repeat and simplify instructions for the student.
- √ Give the student a description of expected behaviors or the rubric to be used for evaluation.
- √ Give step-by-step instructions with the steps outlined in writing or shown in picture sequences.



- √ Assign a study buddy to help the student when needed.
- √ Check to see if the student needs any assistance in getting started.
- √ Teach the student how to use an assignment notebook or personal planner to keep track of assignments and work.



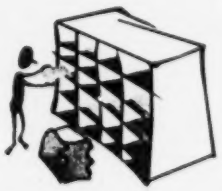
Accommodations for students who have difficulty completing assignments

Some students with a disability have trouble sustaining the effort needed to complete assignments. This may be because they work very slowly and run out of time. They may not be able to anticipate needed resources and materials. Students sometimes run into problems and are reluctant to ask for help or they may lose interest and refuse to continue.

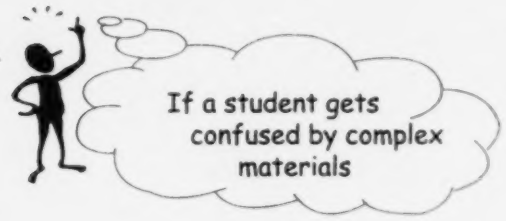
- √ Break long-term assignments into parts with corresponding due dates.
- √ Teach the student to maintain a calendar of assignments.
- √ Give the student an individual responsibility checklist.
- √ Give the student a choice of tasks or assignments.
- √ Let the student have access to learning resources and instructional materials outside of class.
- √ Use a kitchen timer to define work times.
- √ Reduce the total amount of work, but select those tasks or items that are needed to accomplish learning objectives.
- √ Have the student keep a journal or homework log that includes the instructions and timelines.
- √ Communicate homework assignments and expectations to parents so they can help, if needed.
- √ At first, give partial credit for late assignments or incomplete work until the student is able to complete the work on time.

Accommodations for students who have difficulty with complex tasks and organization

Complex tasks present problems to some students with a disability because they have trouble attending to more than one thing at a time. Students who are easily distracted forget the instructions or get tasks confused. Some instructional materials are not clearly formatted on the page or in a book. Overwhelming amounts of details can be very confusing to students.



Keeping track of classroom materials also presents problems to many students with a disability because they lack internal controls, do not understand what is expected, and can not remember what to do. They don't know how to store materials so they can easily find them. Lockers or desks may be cluttered with extra things that are not really needed at school. Here are some techniques that can help these students.



√ Indicate sections on paper for each response by drawing lines or folding.

√ Use different kinds of paper for assignments, such as graph paper for doing computations or paper with midlines for taking notes.

√ Use color-coding to help students identify tasks, meanings, or expectations.

√ Show students how to cover parts of text or worksheet not being used.

√ Give page numbers for locating answers to questions in textbook.

√ Simplify directions by numbering each step.

√ Use clear formatting for handouts, assignments, and tests.

√ Use uncluttered and clearly formatted tests and worksheets. Arrange problems or items so that it is easy to know where to start and how to proceed.

THIS

Name _____ Date_____

A Test of General Knowledge

1. 24 + 35 = ____
2. 4 - 7 x 5 = ____

3. The rain in _____ falls mainly on the_____.

4. Which of the following is correct?
   a. Purple is made of red and green.
   b. Yellow is a primary color.
   c. None of the above

5. What is the meaning of democracy?
   _____ _____ _____

NOT THIS

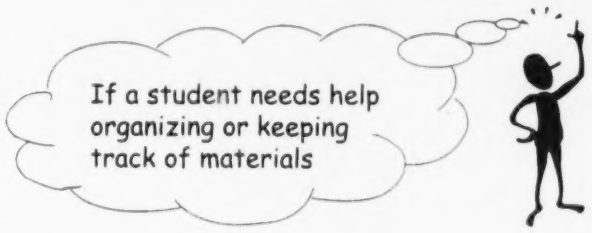
Name _____ Date_____

A Test of General Knowledge

1. 24 + 35 = 3. The rain in ____
2. 4 - 7 x 5 = falls mainly on the_____. 4. What is the meaning of democracy?_____
_____

5. Which of the following is correct?
a Purple is made of red and green
b Yellow is a primary color
c None of the above

√ Let the student use a special folder or binder to keep materials organized. Use dividers or folders to keep subjects organized and use color-coding by unit or subject.



√ Give the student a compartmentalized container for classroom materials, tools, and supplies.

√ Let the student use physical supports such as bookends, plastic containers to keep supplies, or bags or folders for work materials.

√ Place a timetable or assignment list on the student's desk.

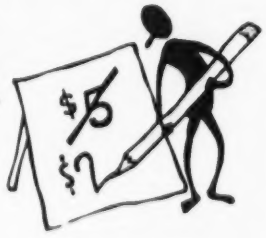
√ Give the student a checklist of materials needed for each class to be kept in the student's locker or binder.

√ Give the student a written copy of instructions and requirements for each assignment.

√ Let the student keep one copy of school materials at home and another copy in class.

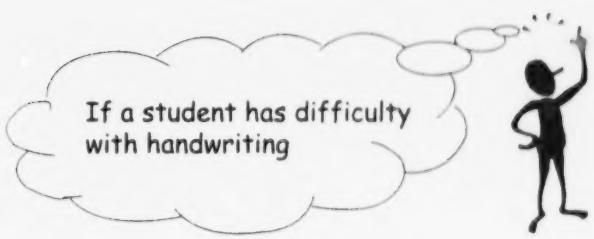
Accommodations for students with limited writing abilities

Writing problems may be the result of difficulties with handwriting due to a lack of small muscle coordination and control or the result of underlying expressive language disabilities in finding words, forming sentences, organizing thoughts, and using the standard conventions of grammar and spelling. When making decisions about accommodations for problems with writing, it is important to consider what causes the problem. Here are some techniques that can assist students.

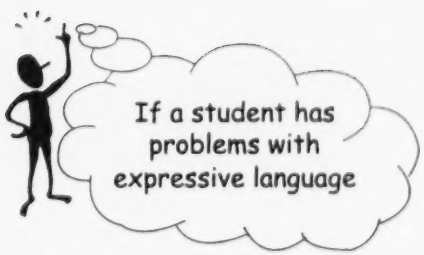


√ Place a dot on the upper left side of the paper to help the student remember where to start writing.

√ Give the student a copy of notes or directions for the assignment.

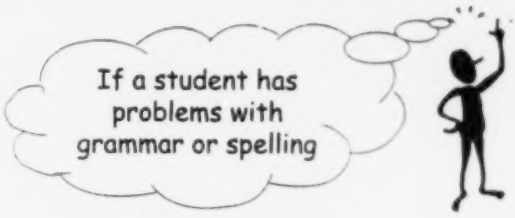


- √ Let the student write in the workbook or on a copy of the workbook page.
- √ Let the student use a word-processor or typewriter.
- √ Let the student dictate his or her work to a teaching assistant or classmate who will write it down.
- √ Let the student create an audio or video recording of his or her response to a classroom assignment.
- √ Let the student use adaptive devices: pencil grips or special pen or pencil holders, erasable pens, special paper with raised or color-coded line indicators.
- √ Make sure that worksheets have ample space for writing answers.
- √ Give the student two copies of a worksheet. One to work on as a draft and one to use as a final copy to hand in.



- √ Let student use graph paper for writing computation problems to help align the numbers.
- √ Reduce the length of a written assignment or allow more time.
- √ Let the student use a thesaurus (book or computer-based) to find words to write or say.
- √ Let the student use special word processing software that assists and anticipates what the student is trying to write.
- √ Give the student a structured outline or graphic organizer to help plan written assignments or oral presentations.
- √ Let the student use graphic or word processing software to plan ideas before writing.

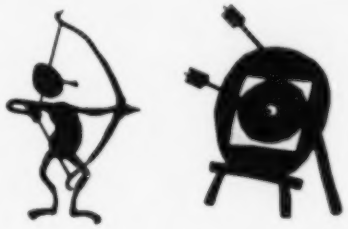
- √ Let the student use a spelling dictionary or electronic spelling aid.
- √ Let the student use peer editing or teacher assistance in the revision process.



- √ Let the student use the spell-check or grammar-check utility in word processing software.
- √ Grade content and mechanics separately in assignments requiring written expression. Give the student a chance to correct identified spelling and grammar errors.

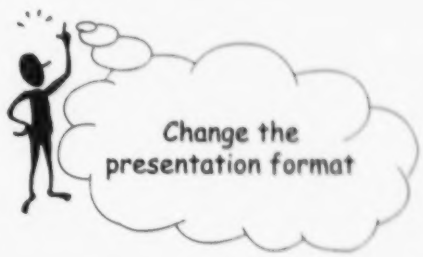
Accommodations for students who have difficulty taking tests

In general, students with a disability should be provided the same types of accommodations for both assignments and assessments. If a student needs to have extended time to complete assignments, he or she should also be able to have extended time for classroom tests and for standardized tests, if allowed. Accommodations used with standardized tests such as the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test* (FCAT) must be consistent with what is specified in the test manual. Alternate testing techniques provide the opportunity for students with a disability to demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills without being unfairly restricted by their disability.

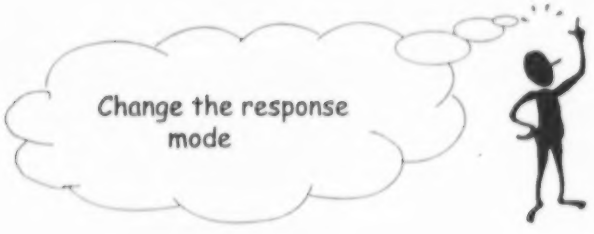


Four basic kinds of changes can be made to classroom tests and standardized tests. The four major types of accommodations allowed for tests are presentation format, response mode, test procedures, and setting. Here are some possibilities for each type of accommodation.

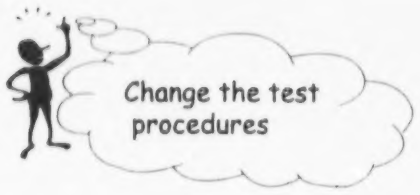
- √ Read the test items to the student, unless the assessment is a test of reading skills.
- √ Let the student read the test items aloud as he or she works on the assessment.
- √ Provide copies of the test on audiotape, in braille, or in large print format.



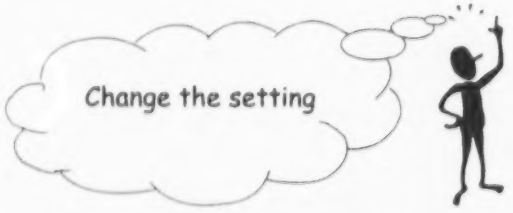
- √ Let the student use assistive technology for magnification or amplification, if needed.
- √ Provide a sign language interpreter to interpret oral directions.
- √ Use symbols on the test or answer form that help the student follow directions, such as an arrow or stop sign.
- √ Reread or explain the directions during the test if the student needs it.
- √ Underline or highlight important words in the directions or test items.
- √ Group questions so that similar kinds of items are together. Put the easiest questions first.
- √ Block matching questions into small groups of four or five items.
- √ Provide a list of words to use for fill-in-the-blank questions.



- √ Increase space allowed for test answers.
- √ Let the student respond orally, dictate to an aide, or tape record answers on a test.
- √ Let the student use a typewriter or word processor to write answers to the test items.
- √ Let the student write on the test itself instead of writing on an answer sheet.
- √ Let the student use webs, diagrams, or charts and outlines to plan for or respond to open-ended or essay questions.
- √ Let the student provide alternate demonstrations of knowledge and skills using objects and oral explanations, role playing, or interviewing.



- √ Give extra examples for practice.
- √ Let the student have additional time to complete test.
- √ Break the test into small sections and let the student take it over a period of days, if needed.
- √ Eliminate one of the choices in multiple-choice items.
- √ Require fewer questions, but select ones that measure all required content and skills.
- √ Grade the student's response separately for content and mechanics.
- √ Let the student take an open book test, unless memorization of content is required.
- √ Let the student use references such as a spelling dictionary.
- √ Let the student use a calculator to recheck or complete computations.
- √ Give partial credit for answers that are partly correct.
- √ Let the student retake the test and give credit for improvement.
- √ Give shorter tests more frequently.



- √ Administer the test individually or in small groups.
- √ Let the student use a study carrel to take the test.
- √ Let the student take the test in another classroom where there are no distractions.
- √ Let the student take breaks during the test period.

Test preparation

Many students feel anxious when they are being tested. Sometimes students worry about the score and its impact on their grade or passing the course. Students with a disability need to learn how to take tests and how to deal with any special circumstances in the testing procedures that may be different from working on classroom assignments. Often students may be able to get help from the teacher or peer when working on a classroom assignment, but are not allowed to ask for help when taking a test. Preparing students for tests may help to alleviate some of their anxiety.

To help students prepare for the test

√ Provide instruction in test-taking skills. Use practice tests to help students learn some of the strategies effective test-takers use.

√ Conduct a review of the knowledge and skills to be tested several days before the test.

√ Provide study guides to help students prepare for the test.

√ Give the student practice with the testing format. Use sample questions and explain the scoring rubric or procedures.

√ Read the instructions of the test to the student and simplify the language, if needed. Go over enough sample questions to make sure the student knows what to do.

After testing is over, make sure students review how they did and identify any problem areas that need to be corrected.

√ Review corrected tests and provide a debriefing.

√ Have students evaluate their own performance on the test.
Did I study the right things?

Did I make use of clues in the test?

Did I survey the test and plan my response?

Did I use the time allowed effectively?

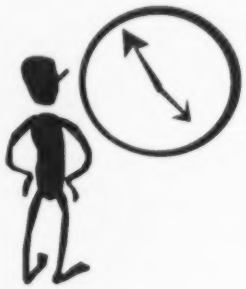
Did I answer the questions I knew first?

Did I correct mistakes?

Did I have to guess?

Time demands and scheduling

Students with a disability may work or learn at a slower pace than do their peers. Some students do better when they are not under the pressure of a strict schedule. Accommodations can be made to time demands for assignments and assessments, as well as for whole programs of study.



In some cases time demands can be adjusted by reducing the amount of practice required. If the assignment or assessment has many similar items, a student may be asked to do every other one. At the secondary level, the extension of time may require that the student receive an "incomplete" as a grade for a course or project and then be allowed to complete the course or assignment within a specified time frame. Here are some additional techniques related to adjusting time demands.

- √ Use flexible scheduling practices that allow the student more time to complete a course. Sometimes summer school can be used for this purpose.
- √ Let the student have additional time for assignments and assessments.
- √ Give assignments ahead of time, so the student can get started early.
- √ Provide a clear schedule with checkpoints along the way.
- √ Use a reward system to motivate assignment completion. Let the student engage in an activity of choice following the completion of a required assignment.
- √ Give the student shorter tasks.
- √ Give the student easier tasks first.

Attention to scheduling practices is especially important in middle and high school programs. ESE teachers should be involved in preparing the school's master schedule so they can represent the needs of students with a disability. Common planning periods can facilitate the needed collaboration between regular and ESE teachers.

Learning environment

Accommodations may be needed that involve changes to the physical features or organization of the school or classroom to assist students with a disability. Changes to the learning environment may include alterations to the physical setting, grouping arrangements, or behavioral expectations and classroom management procedures. In some cases, an alternative learning environment that is self-contained or off-campus may be needed. When an off-campus site is selected, it is important that students with a disability still be provided the opportunity for activities with nondisabled people.

Physical facilities and equipment

An accessible or barrier-free environment is necessary to enhance the mobility of students with a disability. Many buildings are well-equipped with nonslip surfaces, guide rails, ramps, elevators, and automatic doors for students who have difficulty getting around. Accessibility standards are included in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mentioned in the first chapter of this manual. The standards describe requirements for elements such as parking and exterior routes, entries into buildings and rooms, alarms, telephones, drinking fountains, and restrooms.

Some accommodations may be needed for individual students. Special lighting and tilt-top desks may be needed by students who are blind or visually impaired. Students in wheelchairs may need to have raised desks or countertops. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may need classrooms that have special acoustical treatments.

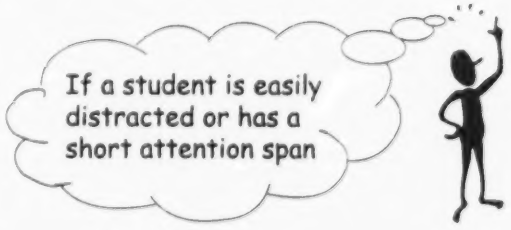
If you have a student with a disability who needs these types of accommodations and they are not readily available in your school, you may need to advocate for this student. Talk about the student's needs with other teachers and staff. Have a meeting with the appropriate administrator to see what can be done. You can also contact district staff for information and assistance.

Accommodations to the learning environment to help with behavior management

Changes to the learning environment may also be needed to help some students manage their own behavior. Often, but not always, these students are identified as having emotional handicaps or severe emotional disturbance.

Learning what the rules of conduct are and learning how to abide by them is sometimes as hard as learning how to solve a complex problem in science or mathematics or learning how to speak a foreign language fluently. Special behavioral plans or counseling services might be needed for some students with a disability. However, for most students with a disability, simple accommodations can be made to the behavioral environment of the classroom. Suggestions for accommodation techniques to use with students who have common learning problems can be found on the following pages:

- short attention spans (p. 39)
- difficulty working in groups (pp. 40-41)
- difficulty controlling their behavior throughout the day (pp. 41-42)



√ Let the student use an enclosed study carrel to complete independent work.

√ Let the student sit in an area away from the busy parts of a classroom.

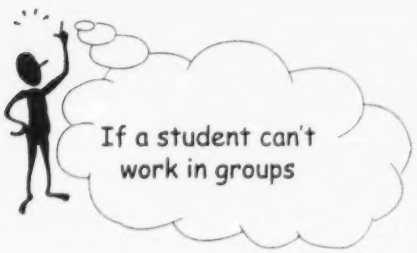
√ Give the student tasks that can be completed in short periods of time.

√ Let the student use a timer to monitor how much longer he or she has to work on specific tasks.

√ Give the student legitimate opportunities to get up and move in the classroom, use the restroom, or get a drink of water.

√ Have the student sit close to the teacher.

ACCOMMODATIONS



Accommodations for grouping arrangements may be needed for a student who requires increased personal attention and support from school personnel. A student may require additional assistance and guidance on tasks through small group instruction or tutoring.

For whole group instruction and practice

Whole group

- √ Let the student sit next to an aide, volunteer, or trained classmate who can help maintain attention and understanding.
- √ Give the student a preview of what is going to happen during the class.
- √ Provide a balance of activities within the lessons.
- √ Provide follow-up instruction individually, as needed.

For small group instruction and practice or cooperative learning activities

Small group

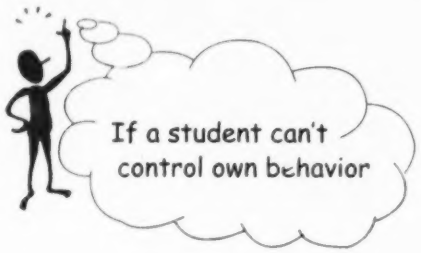
- √ Make sure student has the communication and social skills needed for group interaction.
- √ Assign a specific role and responsibility to the student when working in a group.
- √ Let the student work with a trained classmate to help keep on task in a group situation.
- √ Allow partial participation in cooperative groups.

For independent work, study, and practice

√ Let the student use a learning center with appropriate materials and equipment.

√ Let the student use self-checking materials or computer-assisted instruction to practice skills.

√ Identify a study buddy who can repeat and explain directions.



A student who cannot manage his or her own behavior may need the help of positive behavioral supports or a specialized behavior management system. This may require daily or weekly monitoring of behavior in school with reports to the parents on a regular basis. The use of predictable routines for daily activities is generally very helpful to such students. All students need clear rules and consistent enforcement in the classroom. Parents may collaborate by using similar strategies at home.

√ Give the student a copy of class rules and expectations. Let students role play positive and negative examples of behaviors on a regular basis to make sure all students understand.

√ Give positive reinforcement for using replacement behaviors or following class rules.

√ Establish and regularly use a hierarchy of consequences for rule infractions. Make sure that the student knows what the expectations and consequences are.

√ Monitor student's compliance with class rules and communicate regularly with the student, the family, or others.

√ Identify a study buddy who can help the student when the teacher is unavailable. Make sure the buddy knows how to work effectively with the student.

- √ Provide a set of alternative activities for the student during unstructured time. Make sure the student knows how to initiate and complete the activities and wants to do them.

- √ Use a regular routine for transitions in the class. Establish a system of alerts and procedures to follow to get ready to start a lesson, to change classes, to complete an activity, to go to lunch, to go to another area in the school.

- √ Identify a quiet area where student may go when necessary.

- √ Seat the student away from distractions such as windows, heating or cooling vents, doors, resource areas, and any other students who may disrupt the student.

Special communication systems

Some students with a disability require the use of specialized communication systems. These systems may involve the use of different modes of communication, such as total communication that involves sign language, finger spelling, and lip reading for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Other students may need to use augmentative communication systems such as a communication board or a presented symbol system. Students with limited English proficiency may also need assistance with communication.

If you have a student who requires a specialized communication system, it will be important for you to learn about the unique requirements of the system. You may need to get training in the use of the system so you can easily communicate with the student and not rely on interpreters or translators.

Summary

The accommodations described in this chapter are intended to help you identify ways to support the achievement of all students in your classroom, including those with a disability. The value of any accommodation can be measured in terms of its impact on the performance and attitude of the student with a disability in the classroom. Without the accommodation, the student will not be as successful.

Chapter

4

Get Started by Planning

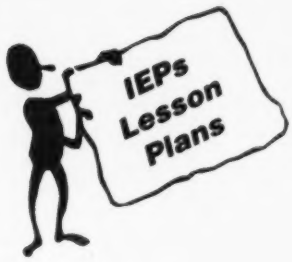
Start with the IEP

Anticipate the student's needs

Plan for each lesson

Don't do it alone

Reflect on the impact



Start with the IEP

Providing accommodations for students with a disability is not as complicated as it may seem. You have help from a team of concerned professionals and family members.

For every student with a disability, a team of educators, the parents, and the student meets at least once a year to develop an individual educational plan (IEP). The IEP includes a description of the student's present level of performance and annual goals and objectives. It also describes the types of special education and other services, including accommodations and modifications, that the student will need. All teachers who have responsibility for educating the student can get a copy of the IEP and use the information to guide their plans.

As described in the first chapter, you will most likely find a description of the accommodations needed by the student on the pages of the IEP that describe the services needed by the student. The accommodations may be listed separately, or they may be included in statements describing program or course modifications, supplementary aids and services, and test modifications.

If you need additional information about the student's needs, talk with a teacher or other person who knows the student.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Forms used for IEPs in individual school districts may vary in the way the information is documented. The sample on this page is reproduced from *Developing Quality Individual Educational Plans*, (1999) by the Florida Department of Education. You'll notice that the word "accommodations" does not appear on the form. Don't be confused. The sections on the form for "Program Modifications," "Supplementary Aids and Services," and "State and Districtwide Assessment Program Modifications" are the places where the accommodations can be documented. These specific phrases are used to match the language used in the federal law, IDEA 1997.

The sample IEP on this page shows how accommodations are noted. Edner requires special education services to learn how to use organizational strategies in the classroom, to learn how to control his own behavior, and to learn how to edit and revise written material. The accommodations he needs are marked with a ◗.

Student Name *Edner* ID # *333 33 3333* Date *9/9/98* Page *5* of *6*

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

Services and modifications relate to assisting the student to advance appropriately toward attaining annual goals, to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum, and to be educated and participate with other students with a disability and nondisabled students in activities.

PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS/ SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL	Dates: Initiation	Duration	Frequency	Location
◗ Consultation for regular ed. teacher	9/9/98	9/8/99*	monthly	middle school
◗ Consultation with parents	9/9/98	9/8/99*	monthly	middle school
◗ Repeated clarification of lessons	9/9/98	9/8/99*	daily	6th/7th grade
◗ Assignments and tests presented orally	9/9/98	9/8/99*	daily	6th/7th grade
◗ Modified written instructional materials	9/9/98	9/8/99*	daily	6th/7th grade

SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SERVICES	Dates: Initiation	Duration	Frequency	Location
◗ Instructional materials on tape	9/9/98	9/8/99*	daily	6th/7th grade
◗ Behavior system, weekly assessments, reinforcement contingencies	9/9/98	6/9/99	daily/weekly	6th grade

* Note: Modifications and Supplementary Services to be provided during regular school year.

STATE AND DISTRICTWIDE ASSESSMENT MODIFICATIONS

Participation in state and districtwide assessment program(s) *X* Yes ___ No ___ NA

If yes, describe needed modifications for each *tests presented orally, except test of reading*

Anticipate students' needs

Once you have read the IEP, you can use the information it contains when you are planning for the units and lessons in your classroom. If you have more than one student with a disability in your classes, it is a good idea to make a chart for your lesson plan book with the names and the accommodations needed by each student. This will serve as easy reference as you write your plans each week.

Students	Accommodations
Edner	Consultation-ESE staff and parents Oral presentation of assignments and tests Modified written instructional materials Instructional materials on tape Behavior system—weekly assessments, reinforcements
Tiffany	Textbooks and class materials in braille and on tape Use talking calculator, Braille and Speak, tape recorder, braillewriter Collaborative planning Assistance with instructional activities
Zeke	Copies of class notes, extra time to complete assignments

Sample chart

When you are planning individual lessons, projects, or large units of instruction, you will be thinking about what students are expected to learn and what kinds of activities will be used. You will also be planning the types of tests or performance assessments to be used to measure student progress. As you make decisions about the learning activities and assessments, you can check your accommodations chart to see what you will need to provide for the students with a disability that are in your class. It makes sense to make a note in your plans about needed accommodations, so you will have sufficient time to gather or prepare any special materials or equipment. If you had Edner, Tiffany, and Zeke in your class, you would need to make them a copy of any notes you are going to be using for the class, obtain the taped materials or arrange to have them recorded, and get the class handouts formatted in braille. Your ESE department should be able to provide assistance in these areas.

Aim toward independence

It's important to remember that students with a disability continue to learn and develop, even though it may be at a slower pace than most students. With continued instruction on essential skills for learning such as reading and writing, their need for certain kinds of accommodations should lessen over time. Most accommodations should be thought of as temporary. Help the student become less and less dependent on the accommodations and more reliant on his or her own abilities. Even though students with a disability may need help and assistance when they are still acquiring skills, the goal is to help them become less and less dependent on the accommodations.

Plan for each lesson

When you are developing lesson plans and activities for your students, you will need to consider the specific kinds of accommodations that will be needed. If you have already located alternate materials or equipment, you may only need to prepare study guides or cue cards. Many accommodations take no preparation at all. They only require that you remember to provide the prompts or assistance needed by the student.

What accommodations are needed to make sure that my students with a disability can successfully participate and master the objectives?

Don't forget that many of the accommodations suggested in this manual can benefit other students in your class. Here's some help. As you look at the objectives and activities for each lesson, ask yourself

What is needed?

- *What is expected of my students in this unit or lesson?*
- *How will I deliver instruction?*
- *What materials will students be expected to use?*
- *What kinds of activities will be used?*
- *What kinds of practice will students have?*
- *How will I assess the students?*
- *What kind of learning environment will be needed?*

Once you are clear about your expectations and plans for your class, you are ready to think about the accommodations. You can ask yourself

- *Will the student(s) with a disability be more able to participate in the activities and master the objectives of this lesson when I*
  - *change the way instruction is delivered?*
  - *change the materials to be used?*
  - *change the way the student must respond?*
  - *increase support in the learning environment?*
  - *change the physical features of the room?*
  - *change the behavior management strategies?*
  - *change the schedule or adjust time demands?*
  - *change the assessment procedures?*

Do expected outcomes need to be modified?

In most cases, accommodations are sufficient for a student with a disability to be successful in the classroom. However, you may find that some students may need modified requirements or expectations.

When to modify

Modifications are changes that can be made to WHAT students are expected to learn. Modifications for students with a disability are determined by the IEP team. Modifications may include

- partial completion of program or course requirements
- curriculum expectations below age or grade level
- alternate assessment criteria
- alternate curricular goals

Here's a process to follow if you think that a student with a disability needs modified expectations.

1. *First,* check the student's IEP to see what kinds of modifications are needed for the curriculum. The student may be working below grade level or have other educational needs that must be addressed.

2. *Second,* consult with the student's ESE teacher(s) or other personnel in the school to find out if modifications are appropriate for this student. A meeting of the IEP team may be needed. Remember that modifications to expectations can have a significant impact on the student's ability to earn a standard diploma.

3. *Third,* if modifications are needed, try to work them into the regular activities and experiences in your classroom. Help the student with a disability to continue to feel part of the class. If other students make fun or say it's not fair, have a discussion about this so they can understand.

Don't do it alone

Collaboration is a must when providing accommodations for a student with a disability. Responsibility for the student's educational program rests with many individuals. Some schools have special education teachers who provide consultation services. Other schools schedule common planning periods so teachers can work together. Professional support from staff in guidance, school health, vision, speech-language, or adaptive physical education can be obtained, if needed. You have the support of a team.

Shared duties

The educational program of a student with a disability is a joint responsibility of regular and special education personnel. As the regular educator, you have the knowledge of the expectations of the Sunshine State Standards and expertise in academic or vocational educational programs. Special education personnel can help by identifying techniques that work with students with a disability and identifying resources to help you as you teach.

Collaboration or consultation of professional staff and parents is sometimes identified on a student's IEP as a type of accommodation. This is intended to insure that these individuals meet or confer on a regular basis and are informed of the progress or needs of the student. Collaboration might be targeted toward general problem solving, identifying needed resources, or monitoring the effectiveness and impact of the instructional program and the accommodations. Documentation of the process and outcomes of collaboration must be maintained.

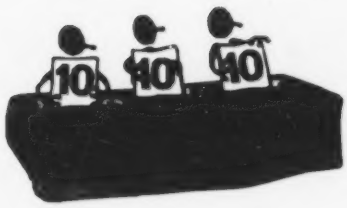
Support for school personnel may also be included on the student's IEP. Support for school personnel involve services that are provided directly to the regular teacher, special education teacher, or other school personnel to assist a student with a disability to be involved or progress in the regular curriculum. Support may include training or staff development activities to ensure that school personnel have the knowledge and skills needed to help the student. Support may include consultant services, collaborative teaching, or assistance from a paraprofessional or teacher aide. Special equipment or materials, such as a braille writer, may also be needed by school personnel to provide modifications needed by the student.

Keep your door open for input and ideas about working with a student with a disability. When you are experiencing problems, don't be afraid to ask for assistance. You may find that other teachers have had the same problems and are willing to share successful solutions. Don't forget about talking with the student's parents or the student him- or herself.

Reflect on the impact

As mentioned at the end of chapter 3, the value of any accommodation is measured in terms of its impact on the performance and attitude of the student with a disability. Some things to consider when reflecting on the impact of an accommodation include

- *Did the student actually use and take advantage of the accommodation?*
- *Was the student able to participate fully in the activity because of the accommodation?*
- *Was the student able to master the objectives of the lesson or course because of the accommodation?*
- *Did the accommodation help the student to feel he or she belongs in the class?*



If the answer to all these questions is "Yes," then the accommodation is doing what was intended. If the answer to any of these questions is "No," then you need to do some troubleshooting to find out why the accommodation isn't working as planned. You may need to use a different type of accommodation or you may need to think about the expectations for this student.

It is also true that some teachers are reluctant to provide accommodations because they believe that the accommodations will require a great deal of extra work. If a particular accommodation requires an extraordinary amount of effort by the teacher or causes a disturbance to the rest of the class, then its impact is likely to be diminished because the teacher may not be able to provide the accommodation on a regular basis.

If you find yourself feeling that the accommodations are not working or that you can't implement them effectively, contact the ESE personnel in your school. They can help you with these problems.

Where to go from here?

The appendices in this manual provide additional sources of information and assistance for you.

Appendix A includes an annotated list of books that provide many ideas related to accommodations.

Appendix B includes copies of the two State Board of Education Rules that relate to accommodations for students with a disability in Florida.

Appendices

Appendix A

An annotated list of resources for accommodations

Appendix B

State Board of Education Rules related to accommodations

Appendix A

Resources for Accommodations

Adapting Instruction to Accommodate Students in Inclusive Settings, Third Edition
Judy W. Wood. (1998). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

This is a complete package with information and practical suggestions for providing appropriate services for students with disabilities and other at-risk students. The first part of the book includes a discussion of the legal foundation, the responsibilities of the multidisciplinary team, the characteristics of students, and placement options. The second part introduces a systematic process for including students with a disability. Many suggestions are provided for adapting the environment, lesson plans, teaching techniques, content, media, and evaluation and grading.

Curriculum Adaptations for Students with Learning and Behavior Problems: Principles and Practices
John J. Hoover and James R. Patton. (1997). Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children

This guide helps in adapting content and strategies for elementary and high school students with mild learning and behavior problems. Easy-to-use guides and checklists help the teacher determine what kind of adaptations are needed, adapt content and strategies used for instruction, and adapt learning strategies and study strategies used by the students.

Effective Strategies That Accommodate Diverse Learners
Edward J. Kameenui and Douglas W. Carnine, Editors. (1998). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

This book is about teaching strategies that work with diverse groups of students, including those at risk for failure in school. The text is organized around six principles of instruction and curriculum design, with explanations and applications for beginning reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The authors provide a synthesis of research and a conceptual framework.

Ideas for Inclusion: The Classroom Teacher's Guide to Integrating Students with Severe Disabilities
Anne M. Beninghof and Anne Louise T. Singer. (1993). Longmont, CO: Sopris West

This book provides the background information and philosophy for successful integration of students with severe disabilities into a regular school and into regular education classrooms. A wide variety of techniques are described for helping staff and students get ready for these students. In addition, ideas are included on how to help these students successfully function and participate in the routine life of the school and the classroom.

Ideas for Inclusion: The School Administrator's Guide
Anne M. Beninghof and Anne Louise T. Singer. (1995). Longmont, CO: Sopris West

This book provides the background information school administrators need to know when planning for inclusion. Topics addressed in the book include leadership, planning process, assessment, and curriculum and instruction, personnel, business management, and family and community.

Modifying Curriculum for the Special Needs Student in the Regular Classroom
Lynne Chalmers. (1992). Moorehead, MN: Practical Press

This book will help the regular classroom teacher or the special education teacher to modify instructional materials to assist the student with special needs. Techniques for creating study guides, teaching students ways to gain information from lectures, and strategies for test taking are included. Clear and practical procedures are outlined for dealing with the problems encountered by the general and special education teacher in dealing with students with special needs.

Teaching Kids with Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Challenge and Motivate Struggling Students
Susan Winebrenner. (1996). Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children

This book includes ideas for activitites that can be used on the first day of school to make all students feel welcome. Concise explanations are provided of the various learning differences found in an inclusive classroom. Techniques for dealing with diverse learning styles, language, literacy, science, math, social studies, and behavior problems are included. This book also has more than 50 reproducible forms.

Appendix B

State Board of Education Rules

6A-6.0312 Course Modifications for Exceptional Students.

6A-1.0943 Modification of the State Student Assessment Test Instruments and Procedures for Exceptional Students and Other Eligible Handicapped Students.

Course Modifications

6A-6.0312 Course Modifications for Exceptional Students. School boards shall modify basic courses, as necessary, to assure exceptional students the opportunity to meet the graduation requirements for a standard diploma. School boards shall modify vocational courses and programs of study, as necessary, to assure handicapped students the opportunity to meet graduation requirements for a standard or a special diploma.

(1) Modifications to basic courses shall not include modifications to the curriculum frameworks or student performance standards. When modifying vocational courses, the particular outcomes and student performance standards which a student must master to earn credit must be specified on the student's individual educational plan.

(2) Modifications to basic or vocational courses may include any of the following:

(a) The instructional time may be increased or decreased.

(b) Instructional methodology may be varied.

(c) Special communications systems may be used by the teacher or the student.

(d) Classroom and district test administration procedures and other evaluation procedures may be modified as specified in Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC., to accommodate the student's handicap.

(3) When modifying basic courses, the school board shall use one of the following strategies:

(a) Assignment of the exceptional student to an exceptional education class for instruction in a basic course with the same student performance standards as those required of nonexceptional students in the district pupil progression plan, or

(b) Assignment of the exceptional student to a basic education class for instruction which is modified to accommodate the student's exceptionality.

(4) The district shall determine which of these strategies to employ based on an assessment of the student's needs and shall reflect this decision in the student's individual educational plan.

(5) Exceptional students enrolled in basic courses utilizing the strategy described in Rule 6A-6.0312(3)(a), FAC., shall be counted at exceptional student special program cost factors only if the class is being taught in a special program for exceptional students, by a qualified teacher in accordance with Rule 6A-1.0503, FAC.

(6) The school board's provisions for course modifications shall be incorporated in the district's pupil progression plan.

Specific Authority 229.053(1), 230.23(4)(m), 236.081(1)(c) FS. Law Implemented 232.246(5), 232.247 FS. History - New 4-30-85, Formerly 6A-6.312, Amended 4-23-87.

Modification of State Student Assessment Tests

6A-1.0943 Modification of the State Student Assessment Test Instruments and Procedures for Exceptional Students and Other Eligible Handicapped Students.

(1) The Division of Public Schools shall develop the modified test instruments required herein and provide technical assistance to school districts in the implementation of the modified test instruments and procedures.

(2) Each school board shall implement appropriate modifications of the test instruments and test procedures established for issuance of a standard or special high school diploma, pursuant to Rules 6A-1.0942, 6A-1.095, and 6A-1.0995, FAC., within the limits prescribed herein. Such modifications shall include:

(a) Flexible scheduling. The student may be administered a test during several brief sessions, so long as all testing is completed by the final allowed test date specified by the Commissioner.

(b) Flexible setting. The student may be administered a test individually or in a small group setting by a proctor rather than in a classroom or auditorium setting.

(c) Recording of answers. The student may mark answers in a test booklet, type the answers by machine, or indicate the selected answers to a test proctor. The proctor may then transcribe the student's responses onto a machine-scorable answer sheet.

(d) Mechanical aids. The student may use a magnifying device, a pointer, a noncalibrated rule or template or other similar devices to assist in maintaining visual attention to the test booklet. An abacus and a braille writer may be used. Use of electronic calculators, including talking calculators, is prohibited.

(e) Revised format. The student may be tested by one or more of the following three (3) methods specifically developed by the Department:

1. Visual reading. The student may be tested with materials which are enlarged print or may be tested with regular print materials enlarged through mechanical or electronic means. Enlarged materials shall be provided only for students who meet the eligibility criteria for visually impaired programs specified in Rule 6A-6.03014, FAC.

2. Tactile reading. The student may be tested with materials which have been transformed to braille code or tested by using devices which permit optical to tactile transformations. Test items which have no application for the nonsighted person will be deleted from the tactile forms authorized or provided by the Department and shall be deleted from the requirements of Rules 6A-1.0941 and 6A-1.0942, FAC.

3. Auditory or sign language presentation. The test administrator may sign, provide oral interpretation or read to the student the following portions of the test: all mathematics items, all writing items, all oral reading items, and all directions. The reading items shall be read by the student using visual or tactile means.

(3) The preceding modifications are authorized, when determined appropriate by the school district superintendent or designee, for any student who has been determined to be an eligible exceptional student pursuant to Rules 6A-6.0301 and 6A-6.0331, FAC., and

has a current individual educational plan, or who has been determined to be a handicapped person pursuant to Rule 6A-19.001(6), FAC. Students classified solely as gifted shall not receive any special test modifications. Satisfaction of the requirements of Rule 6A-1.0942, FAC., by any of the above modifications shall have no bearing upon the type of diploma or certificate issued to the student for completing school.

(4) In no case shall the modifications authorized herein be interpreted or construed as an authorization to provide a student with assistance in determining the answer to any test item. (5) Upon receipt of a written request from the district school superintendent, the Commissioner may exempt an exceptional student, or one who has been determined to be a handicapped person pursuant to Rule 6A-19.001(6), FAC., from meeting specific requirements for graduation, due to extraordinary circumstances which would cause the results of the testing to not represent the student's achievement, but rather, reflect the student's impaired sensory, manual, speaking, or psychological process skills. The written request must document the specific extraordinary circumstances which prevent the student from meeting the requirements of Rules 6A-1.0942 and 6A-1.095(4), FAC.

Specific Authority 120.53(1)(b), 228.2001, 229.053(1), 232.246(9) FS. Law Implemented 120.53(1)(b), 228.2001, 232.246(9) FS. History - New 9-12-78, Amended 3-4-84, Formerly 6A-1.943, Amended 6-12-90.

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